

## **ABSTRACT**

**THESIS:** The Effect of Young Women's Sexual Self-Schemas on Emotional Responses to Sexualized Female Imagery in Magazine Advertising

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This research examined how responses to female imagery displayed in *Cosmopolitan* magazine vary as a function of females' conceptualizations of their own sexual identities. After completing the Sexual Self-Schema Scale (SSSS; Andersen & Cyranowski, 1994), female students were randomly assigned to either a sexualized or non-sexualized advertisement condition. Participants rated how they felt as they viewed three images, reported their attitudes toward the images, and completed a post-task mood assessment. Findings revealed significant main effects for condition and schema, but no interactions. First, women exposed to the non-sexualized series reported more favorable attitudes and felt happier as they viewed the advertisements than those exposed to the sexualized series. Second, women with positive sexual self-schemas indicated more favorable attitudes than negatively schematic women, felt the happiest and most excited as they viewed the series, and reported the most positive affect afterward. Suggestions for future research and marketing implications are discussed.